



# Meeting Notes

## Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group

5.00pm – 7.00pm AEST, Thursday, 3 August 2023

## Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group

### Department of Social Services

### Urbis, Cox Inall Ridgeway

### Meeting notes

Thursday, 3 August 2023 - 5.00pm – 7.30pm AEST

Online via Teams

#### ITEM 1: Acknowledgement of Country – s 22

- The meeting opened with an Acknowledgement of Country

#### ITEM 2: Update from Office for Youth – s 22

- Office for Youth provided an update including information on honorarium payments, opportunities to attend other activities and online training provided by Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVIC).

##### *Honorarium payments*

- Payments are provided to members for their voluntary role in attending and actively participating in meetings and providing advice to DSS. Members receive a payment of \$200 per working day for face-to-face meetings and \$250 per quarter for virtual meetings. These payments recognise the time and advice provided by members. To receive payments, members must genuinely volunteer and actively engage in meetings and communication.

##### *Opportunities to attend other activities*

- Members of advisory groups have additional opportunities to attend conference and summits related to specific issues. These opportunities are meant to provide members with skills and knowledge that can benefit their respective group. The selection process for these opportunities is random to ensure fairness.

##### *YACVIC training opportunities*

- The Office for Youth will be offering online training workshops on youth advocacy through YACVIC. The training is not mandatory but is designed to provide additional skills and knowledge for participants to use in their current and future engagements with government and other individuals. The workshops will be offered at two different times to try to accommodate everyone's schedules. Attending these workshops can benefit members in their roles as advisory group members.

### ITEM 3: Actions from 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, visual scribe meeting notes, Feedback on GovTeams, touching base on feedback received in offline discussions/emails – DSS

- DSS discussed action items from previous meeting including the circulation of documents in PDF format and the request for feedback on GovTeams.
- DSS raised the sharing of visual scribe notes from the last meeting and sought permission from members to share them within DSS as they are seen as valuable and engaging documenting discussions.
- YAG member suggested it would be important to check in with members following each meeting and give members the opportunity for review before it is distributed.
- DSS acknowledged feedback from group on communication issues with GovTeams and discussed potential solutions.

### ITEM 4: How we developed Paper 3, How the Youth Advisory Group have influenced decision making so far - DSS

- DSS discussed the development of Paper 3 to articulate the groups interpretation and ideas for action and provided an update on how the Youth Advisory Group has influenced government decision making.
- DSS mentioned four themes that emerged from the feedback and contributions of the Advisory Group including transparency, trust and engagement and the importance of including the voice of young people in policies and programs that affect them is emphasised.
- Feedback from YAG members was largely positive, that is was great to see that their feedback was heard and reflected in the guiding principles of trust, transparency, engagement and capacity building.
- DSS highlighted the importance of engagement and the need for flexible options to gather voices from those who may not contribute to an advisory group and the need for capacity building in both young people and those working with them.
- DSS discussed that this feedback would contribute to planning how this work will be carried forward beyond the current period of working with the YAG

### ITEM 5: Break

- Psychologist **s 47F** supported the group back into discussion with a reintegration exercise

### ITEM 6: Urbis Presentation – test technology, Safe and Supported Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (MES) – Urbis and Cox Inall Ridgeway

- Urbis, Cox Inall Ridgeway (CIR) explained that they have been engaged by DSS to track the progress of "Safe and Supported." They are working with various government departments, an Indigenous Leadership Group, and stakeholders to develop a monitoring and evaluation strategy or MES. They are seeking input from the youth advisory group to ensure that young people's voices are included in the design and implementation. The input from the group will be used to write the evaluation strategy and will influence how young people's voices are captured and shared. Urbis, CIR

mentioned that they are working on a First Nations monitoring and evaluation strategy to address the higher rates of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care. They welcome ideas and content related to this strategy.

- Urbis/CIR want to hear from the group about why it is important to include the voices of children and young people in their work. They mention a powerful quote they saw in the group chat about "nothing for us without us" and expressed the need to capture these voices throughout the framework. They address a question about whether there will be other areas for input and clarify that the current discussion is focused on the evaluation strategy, but there may be other opportunities in the future. They also mention that participants can email their input if they prefer.
- Urbis/CIR asked the group what it would mean for them to have their views, experiences, and stories heard within this context. One member mentions that it would mean their contributions are valued and taken seriously, and that action is taken based on their input. Another member adds that it would provide validation, recognition of past wrongdoings, and a commitment to improvement. Urbis, CIR acknowledges the importance of being understood and listened to, not just heard. They then moved on to the next question, asking for suggestions on how to share the voices of children and young people. Members suggest using social media platforms, but in an anonymous way to protect privacy. They also mention the idea of podcasts, social media pages, and TED talks run by young people, as well as gathering research and answering questions to break down complex ideas into a more digestible format. The importance of using humanistic language is also highlighted.
- The discussion moved to the different ways to share the voices of young people and the importance of transparency and multiple channels for sharing experiences and the need for youth engagement plans and opportunities for young people to contribute meaningfully. The question of how to evaluate and assess change in systems was raised, with suggestions to use both quantitative and qualitative data and case studies, to provide context and a range of experiences.
- The discussion identified the need to hear the voices and collect stories of children and young people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as Aboriginal backgrounds. Urbis/CIR asked for input on what would make young people feel comfortable sharing their experiences and what red flags they would look out for. There is discussion that trigger warnings are needed to avoid participants being re-traumatised.
- Urbis/CIR discussed the importance of ensuring confidentiality and anonymity when sharing stories and experiences. The group highlighted the risk of stories being recognisable even with identifying information removed, and the potential consequences for young people if their stories are identified. YAG members suggest the need for consent and involving the young person in the process of sharing their story, as well as considering the purpose and impact of sharing the story. The group mentioned the importance of trigger warnings and disclaimers for both the person sharing the story and the audience. They emphasised the need for trust, legal safeguards, and respect for privacy when sharing stories, particularly in instances where media may publish details without consent.
- After the discussion, Urbis/CIR will circulate a short summary document of what was heard and discussed. They will also inform the participants of the next steps and how their contributions will be incorporated into the work. A YAG member asked if individual

meetings with participants was possible, from different states to gather their perspectives.

- DSS offered to have individual chats with participants to discuss state based perspectives and suggests catching up to see how this can be scheduled next week. DSS assured them that there is no pressure to participate if they do not want to.

#### ITEM 7: Break

#### ITEM 8: DSS Forward workplan, meeting times for future meetings as per GovTeams Poll, Practically, how can we work together for the rest of the year? - DSS

- DSS is working on clarifying the forward work plan for the rest of the year. They have been having discussions with various teams and stakeholders within DSS and with the decision making (governance) bodies for Safe and Supported. There have been some challenges in progressing some actions and getting clarity on roles. They hope to have more clarity in the next six weeks. Clarity of dates of meetings have also been a factor when looking at what consultation options are available. DSS said they want to schedule all future meetings and suggested using a poll on GovTEAMS; and emailing individual members to determine the best dates for everyone. DSS acknowledged the need for flexibility and accommodating different schedules and would try to do this as best as possible.
- DSS acknowledges the challenges in getting the action plans underway and emphasises the importance of listening to the First Nations partners and working in partnership with them. DSS mentions upcoming meetings with secretaries of departments and ministers to discuss governance arrangements.
- DSS will compile the actions from the meeting and share them via email. They will work closely with the Office for Youth on this and will seek to provide fortnightly updates in the future.

#### *Reflections from the group:*

- One member appreciated the effort of DSS and Office for Youth but feels that some 'higher-ups' are exaggerating the impact and using it to push their own agenda. They feel that the group is being tokenised and not listened to. They suggest that having ministers actively participate in meetings and implementing the group's ideas might help address this issue.
- Another member expressed disappointment in not being able to meet with <sup>s 47F</sup> and feels that their contributions are not being acknowledged. They suggested that transparency between the workers in the department and the Minister is lacking, leading to miscommunication. They also mention the need for ministers to actively participate in meetings and implement the group's ideas.
- Another member added that the group feels unsupported and wants to see more progress and innovation. DSS acknowledged the shared perspective and commits to providing more visibility and regular updates to the group. DSS agreed to explore

opportunities for the group to engage with other decision making groups involved in the work of Safe and Supported.

#### ITEM 9: Other Business, Next Steps and Next Meeting Date - DSS

##### Close Meeting

- DSS suggested 3 potential dates for the next meeting, response from members would be greatly appreciated.

#### ITEM 10: Voluntary Offline Debrief with Psychologist - s 47F

- Opportunity for Advisory Group members to debrief in confidence with psychologist, s 47F .

##### ACTIONS ITEM

Action	Responsible Party	Due Date
Support members as required to troubleshoot any issues related to GovTeams including sharing tutorial on how to use the platform.	Office for Youth	Ongoing
Obtain consent from members before sharing visual meeting notes	Office for Youth	11 August 2023
Clarifying forward workplan for the rest of the year	DSS	14 September 2023
Synopsis summary of meeting discussion	Urbis/CIR	11 August 2023
<b>Seek interest from YAG members to consult individually with Urbis to provide their individual / or state-based perspectives</b>	DSS in collaboration with Urbis and Office for Youth	25 August 2023
Schedule of potential future meeting dates circulated to members	DSS/Office for Youth	17 August 2023
Fortnightly updates to members	DSS	17 August 2023, ongoing



# Meeting Notes

## Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group

5.00pm – 7.00pm AEST, Monday, 25 September 2023

## Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group

## Department of Social Services

### Meeting notes

Monday, 25 September 2023 – 5.00pm – 7.36pm AEST

Online via Teams

#### ITEM 1: Acknowledgement of Country – s 22

- The meeting opened with an Acknowledgement of Country

#### ITEM 2: Action items from August meeting

DSS provided a short recap of the last meeting, and confirmed they have shared the post-meeting summary shared via GovTEAMS and email and asked if members had any questions.

DSS spoke about future meeting dates for the rest of the year and identified that not all meeting dates and times will work for everyone. DSS have asked that for anyone who the meeting dates don't work for, that they have a discussion with DSS and OFY about how they can still be involved in the meeting.

The forward meeting dates will be sent out in writing and are:

- Wednesday 29 November 12-2pm AEDT
- Thursday 18 January 5-7pm AEDT

At the last meeting DSS agreed to send out more regular updates about the work they are doing with the advisory group work between meetings. So far they have distributed two updates, and have asked members to provide any feedback on those updates. The visual scribe notes have also been posted on GovTEAMS and distributed via email. s 22 noted that recordings are only available via GovTEAMS.

DSS asked members if there were any other items outstanding from the last meeting, no comment from members.

#### ITEM 3: Updates for DSS/OFY

- Delayed until next meeting due to late start of meeting and extra time required for agenda items 4 and 6.

#### ITEM 4: National Housing and Homelessness Plan

47C, s 47E(d)



#### ITEM 5: Break

- Members took a 5 minute break

#### ITEM 6: National early intervention trial for adolescent boys

s 22 introduced members from the department who are working on the National early intervention trial for adolescent boys. Members introduced themselves to the new DSS staff. s 22 reminded members to submit their signed confidentiality form. Members were also reminded that the details of this conversation are to remain confidential; and of the options available to members to seek support if they felt emotionally triggered.

s 22 provided a summary of paper sent out to members and work of the DSS in this space. s 22 asked members if they have any questions on the information sent out.

Overarching feedback from members was that due to the content being discussed, they needed more time with the materials before the meeting.

- Members asked about the current funding commitment and if additional funding will be provided. s 22 provided an overview of how trials usually work within government.
- Members also asked about representations from states and territories on the advisory group supporting the trial design. s 22 confirmed that state and territories are not represented on the advisory group, however jurisdictions will be engaged on the design of the trial. s 22 confirmed that members of the advisory group mainly came from national bodies, and there is support provided for members with lived experience, and that members were informed there was no remuneration available for advisory group members due to the funding available.
- *On advertisement of any service:*
  - Members advised schools were a great place to advertise services like this as they have the ability to pick up behaviour in young boys. Noting that young boys are unlikely to self-identify.
    - Particular that emphasis that schools and boarding schools should be in the best position to pick up if something isn't right at home with young people, and if they are potentially being subjected to violence in the home and are at risk of becoming a perpetrator.
  - Members provided advice on having this focussed on a mentoring program, from experience these boys do not have a strong and appropriate male role model in



their lives. A mentoring program would also enable young boys to feel safe to be vulnerable and speak about these sensitive topics.

- Members advised that these programs should be put in place as standard practice that young boys are told about the program.
- Members warned about many young men feeling shame and not knowing where to go for help.
- Members advised about the risk of approaching parents and guardians, as it is likely that young boys have experienced violence in the home.
- Members provided feedback to focus on targeting secure care facilities in trauma informed ways and ensuring this is provided to Justice departments/services. This could be a good avenue for internal/external staff to promote these services to young people too.
- Members acknowledged that their experience in these conversations happen too late in life and after violence has occurred.
- Members raised that a program like this would likely not work as well if the young person was still experiencing violence and/or abuse in their home themselves.
- *Members provided feedback on effective ways to have conversations with young people and meet them where they are at:*
  - Mentoring was raised
  - Through service providers was raised
  - Breaking down the stigma of mental health and accessing these types of services is very important
  - Recommendation of a focus on lived experience mentors
  - Looking at the young man as a whole not just the aspects of bad behaviour and risk. For instance asking him what might be going on in his life at home.
  - Supporting young men to have a sense of control over their choices
- *Members provided feedback on service delivery including online engagement and access to services:*
  - Young people not having the internet or data to be able to access services online and may not have the technology to be able to do it.
  - Young people may not have the appropriate surroundings to have these meetings (i.e., if they are in a crowded home, in a shelter, in foster care)
  - Privacy and confidentiality are major risks.
  - General consensus is that this service should not be online only. Online is difficult to read social cues and difficult to build rapport.
  - Finding a format that works for young people would be a good way to deliver the service. For example, delivery over online gaming (an example of this was provided) or in youth friendly spaces

#### ITEM 7: Break/Reintegration exercise

**s 47F** walked the group through a reintegration exercise, members were reminded of supports available and the meeting closed at 7:36pm AEST.

#### ITEM 8: Look at forward Work Plan and other business and meeting close

- Meeting closed – this item will be handled by email after the meeting.

#### Voluntary offline debrief with DSS and Office for Youth

- Opportunity for debrief with DSS and Office for Youth in **s 47F** absence.

ATTENDEES	
Role / Organisation	Name
Youth Advisory Group Members	s 47F
Office for Youth	s 22
Chair / Department of Social Services	s 22
Psychological Support	s 47F
Visual Scribe	s 47F
Housing and Homelessness Plan Discussion / Department of Social Services	s 22
Adolescent Boys discussion / Department of Social Services	s 22

ACTIONS ITEM		
Action	Responsible Party	Due Date
Support members as required to troubleshoot any issues related to GovTEAMS including sharing tutorial on how to use the platform.	Office for Youth	Ongoing
Fortnightly updates to members	DSS	9 October 2023 Ongoing
Members to approve sharing of visual scribe notes from this meeting	Advisory group members	Ongoing
Sign and return Confidentiality Agreement	Advisory group members	ASAP
s 47E(d)	Office for Youth and DSS	TBA
Send out forward meeting dates in writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wednesday 29 November 12-2pm AEDT</li> <li>Thursday 18 January 5-7pm AEDT</li> </ul>	Office for Youth	Completed



# Meeting Notes

**Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group**

12.00pm – 1.00pm AEST, Monday, 13 November 2023

**Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group and  
Department of Social Services**

**Additional consultation National Housing and Homelessness Plan**

## Meeting notes

Monday, 13 November 2023 – 12.00pm – 1.05pm AEST

Online via Teams

Acknowledgement of Country – s 22

The meeting opened with an Acknowledgement of Country

National Housing and Homelessness Plan responses to discussion questions

47C, s 47E(d)



ATTENDEES	
Role / Organisation	Name
Youth Advisory Group Members	s 47F
Office for Youth	s 22
Chair / Department of Social Services	s 22



# Meeting Notes

**Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group**

5.00pm – 7.25pm AEDT, Thursday, 7 December 2023

**Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group**

**Department of Social Services**

## Meeting notes

Online via Teams

### ITEM 1: Acknowledgement of Country – s 22

The meeting opened with an Acknowledgement of Country and led the group in an icebreaker.

s 22 also acknowledged s 47F and s 47F role in the meeting and reminded members of the Breakout Room.

### ITEM 2: Actions from August meeting – s 22

s 47E(d)

s 22 acknowledged the work the advisory group did around the Adolescent Boys measure, and provided an update on how their advice would be utilised. s 22 noted that currently the Grant Opportunity Guidelines are being developed for that work, and that DSS would share these with the group when public.

DSS confirmed we expect to provide a 'regular update' before Christmas and will be in touch again in the new year in preparation for our next meeting.

### ITEM 3: Update from Office for Youth – s 22

s 22 provided an update on the development of the March meeting and acknowledged the continuation of the Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group in 2024. s 22 acknowledged that at this stage s 47F would not be continuing. s 22 thanked members for their engagement with the

OFY survey, and noted the improvements OFY would be making to the program in 2024 on the back of the advice received from members.

s 22 acknowledged the work DSS had undertaken to secure an additional meeting with Anne Hollonds, as well re-introduced s 22 and acknowledged that s 22 had moved roles.

s 22 provided an apology for papers being late, and acknowledged the updates DSS was providing the group on a regular basis and noted the next expected dates for the updates.

s 22 then led the group in a meditation exercise.

#### ITEM 4: Refresh of the National Out-Of-Home Care Standards (Action 5d First Action Plan: Safe and Supported) – s 22 and team

s 22 introduced s 22 and her team from DSS. Advisory Group members introduced themselves to s 22 and her team.

s 22 started the session by asking members if they had heard about the NOOHCS.

- Some members identified that they didn't know about the NOOHCS.
- Members discussed how this applied to children and young people of different agencies, and the disparity that can occur between siblings.
- Members raised that children and young people would also have different experiences in engagement in these processes dependent on the person and caseworkers.

s 22 provided an overview of what the standards are for members, identifying that the intention is around providing children and young people with a consistent experience and a baseline set of standards they can expect if they enter out of home care.

- Members asked questions about what the standards are based on.
- Members discussed the justice system and rights of children and young people in these circumstances. s 22 acknowledged these are important experiences, and there can be a lot of cross over for children and young people who experience out-of-home care with the justice system, however the NOOHCS relate purely to children and young people in out-of-home care and not the justice system.

s 22 clarified that today they would like to discuss how DSS should engage with children and young people on the standards, and next year they can discuss the group diving into the work.

s 22 asked members about how young people can be engaged in these processes:

- Focus on grassroots
- It shouldn't be cost-prohibitive for young people; young people should be paid for their time and work comparable to other consultations
- Members focussed on what meaningful engagement with young people would look like, ensuring appropriate supports, payment, recognition of time, effort and experience
- Ensuring there is appropriate psychological supports available
- Formats advisory group members preferred included: workshops, forums, (smaller group focussed)
- Members discussed the idea of dedicated children and young people advocates specifically for those who have experienced OOHCS
- Prefer facilitators who have lived care experience



- Members raised that there was a need to ensure we were creating safe environments for young people but also support caseworkers to be supported in engagement with this work.

Members identified areas requiring a refresh including:

- Learning and development
- Carer responsibilities
- Trauma informed and culturally aware

Members raised a query about the role the YAG can have in refreshing the standards. s 22 explained that the first step was to build a stakeholder engagement plan which will be informed by the YAG discussions. DSS will then engage with the relevant partners and decision making bodies on this plan for Action 5. Their decision will help clarify engaging with the YAG moving forward.

Members noted there was a high burnout rate for caseworkers due to the pressures of their work in child protection. This led to a discussion that part of the work for the NOOHCS refresh should be looking at how we support the workforce to reduce burnout. This will help caseworkers stay in the role longer and be able to maintain relationships with young people they have built up over time. s 22 noted this could be included in the Safe and Supported Workforce action item.

Members asked whether the YAG could be involved in the workforce development questions. s 22 s 22 from DSS provided a short update of where the work is up to. DSS is currently looking at what the workforce needs are across Australia, looking at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce through ACCOs. DSS will look into the next steps for this work as we are not yet sure what consultation work will occur and come back to the YAG to provide an update or further opportunities to engage.

#### ITEM 5: Update on Action 4 – Listening to Living Experience –s 22

s 22 opened the session after the break with a breathing exercise.

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide feedback on the progress made so far and how it has shaped the steps being taken.

s 22 invited s 22 to introduce herself. s 22 provided an update on Action 4, which was discussed earlier in the year. The focus of Action 4 is incorporating the voice of lived experience in the Actions taken under Safe and Supported. s 22 highlighted that a survey is being conducted to understand how organisations currently listen to and include the voice of Safe and Supported priority cohorts. The purpose of this time is to provide an overview of the progress that has been made so far, and how YAG feedback received has been incorporated into the work so far. The YAG feedback from earlier discussion has influenced the specific questions in the survey (to organisations who do this work) and the process for reporting and sharing the findings.

s 22 discussed Box one of the Paper. This part outlines, how specific survey questions as a result of the YAG conversation in May. Some of the questions were also suggested by SNAICC, the national voice for children and the indigenous community-controlled organisation who are really involved in Safe and Supported Actions.

Members asked for clarification on the purpose of this discussion. DSS advised that this was an opportunity to provide feedback and information to members Action 4 and how their input has been actioned as the work has progressed.

s 22 shared that we are asking organisations and academics about their engagement methods and how they address trauma and re-traumatisation. DSS also wanted to ask them about the resources provided to participants with lived experience, such as preparatory information, capability development, therapeutic support, and remuneration. DSS have also asked about the transparency of the mechanism to participants and included a question about feedback loop and how participants receive information about the outcome of their input. s 22 also mentioned a separate question about psychological safety and the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the mechanism. The importance of including questions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in engagement methods was highlighted.

s 22 noted Box 2 provides information on the process for reporting and sharing the findings, which members can review.

s 22 noted that the DSS will look to identify where the YAG could continue work on Action 4 in 2024. This may include opportunities for the YAG to participate in iterative co-design with the Safe and Supported working groups, as we develop up the recommendations to Ministers on new or enhanced mechanisms to inform implementation and monitoring of Safe and Supported and its Action Plans.

DSS reminded members they can contact DSS and provide comments / questions or feedback at any time on this and the NOOHCS item.

#### ITEM 6: Other Matters / Close Meeting – s 22

s 22 thanked everyone for attending the meeting, congratulated everyone on their achievements in 2023 and wished everyone a safe break.

#### ITEM 7: Optional Debrief with s 47F (YAG members)

s 47F provided an optional debrief to support the transition out of the meeting and into daily life.

#### ACTIONS ITEM

Action	Responsible Party	Due Date
Support members as required to troubleshoot any issues related to GovTeams including sharing tutorial on how to use the platform.	Office for Youth	Ongoing
Fortnightly updates to members	DSS	Ongoing
s 47E(d)	DSS	s 47E(d)
Share grant opportunity guidelines for Early Intervention for Adolescent Boys.	DSS	Once publicly available

Provide YAG members with more information on the Workforce Action, and if consider if there is an opportunity for YAG input.	DSS	Once available
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ATTENDEES	
Role / Organisation	Name
Youth Advisory Group Members	s 47F
Office for Youth	s 22
Department of Social Services	s 22 (Chair), s 22
Online Support	s 47F
Visual scribe	s 47F



# Meeting Notes

## Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group

5.00pm – 7.00pm AEDT, Thursday, 18 January 2024

## Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group

## Department of Social Services

### Meeting notes

Online via Teams

#### ITEM 1: Acknowledgement of Country – s 22

*The meeting opened with an Acknowledgement of Country and s 22 led the group in an icebreaker regarding memorable moments from 2023 for the members to share.*

*s 22 also acknowledged the presence of s 22 and s 22 who are responsible for the refresh of the National Out of Home Care Standards.*

#### ITEM 2: Actions from December meeting – s 22

*s 22 provided a recap on the previous meeting and acknowledged the action plans were provided to give members an update on the plans. s 47E(d)*

*s 22 mentioned the progress in obtaining grants and funding for Early Intervention services for Adolescent boys. Additionally, DSS planned to share more information about the workforce action under the Safe and Supported First Action Plan. However, since our last meeting, there hasn't been significant progress on these. DSS assured the group that they are aware of this and will share any updates as soon as possible.*

*s 22 also provided feedback on Action 4, which focuses on incorporating the voices of those with lived experience into the Safe and Supported initiative. DSS shared a paper outlining how the YAG views are being considered in this work.*

*Any questions or clarification and DSS are happy to have a follow up discussion.*

#### ITEM 3: Update from Office for Youth – s 22

*s 22 thanked all members who had provided information on their continued roles in 2024.*

*s 22 also updated members on the proposed scheduling for the March 2024 face to face*

meeting including the combined member Forum on the Wednesday. She also advised that the Office for Youth had met the new cohort of Advisory Groups.

Questions from the members were answered. s 22 noted that more down time made available to the members would be valuable. s 22 noted lessons learned from 2023 that will flow through to the 2024 YAG including them completing online on-boarding instead of doing this work face to face and accommodation requirements. s 22 acknowledged that they had not finalised the agenda yet and would take s 22 comment on board.

#### ITEM 4: Refresh of the National Out-Of-Home Care Standards Green Box

s 22 encouraged vocalising comments so that comments in the chat are not missed or not expanded enough upon.

We have started our conversation on the NOOHCS refresh and acknowledge your comments that they were very new and that there was a lack of awareness about them. Engaging with children and young people should be more prevalent with organisations and agencies and they should have more experience with trauma informed practices and culturally sensitive practices. Valuing young people's experiences and forming genuine connections was very important and appropriate remuneration for engagement. Peer to peer support is also very important to you all.

How do you think we can ensure young people in out of home care receive quality care have the same life outcomes as other young people?

- Consistency in follow up – make sure the child is adapting to surrounds and that carers are provided adequate services so both children and carers receive quality support.
- Age gap philosophies and energy levels between carers and young person can be disruptive. Help to bridge these gaps, could be better supported.
- embedding some fundamental rights into the relevant state acts. Apparently putting support by department for leavers in care plans are legislation but more important needs like an ensured house over a child's head when they age out isn't. The system isn't written to set young people up for success.
- Charter of Rights is not strong enough to ensure accountability from departments, compared to rights being written in legislation.
- Listen to what young people want and do and not just decide for them i.e. Social workers, case workers, speak directly to the young person and not via the family. Input from the young person and what is important to them including who they live with and what supports they need.
- Another thing would be re-evaluation and updates to of the NOOHC standards and guidelines to ensure it's current and relevant at the time. closing gaps and loop holes, etc.

When thinking about what the minimum standards of quality are. Are there specific areas that are important?

- Precise responsibilities and accountability when the carers don't meet them – like a forever home not just something to be taken lightly.
- Prioritising permanence, stability, and safety. Background checks, living condition checks, also providing psychological guidance and assessments, etc. Making sure the basics are there, no abuse, minimum living standards and culturally receptive practices as a core component.



- *Standard of living, health and cleanliness and maximum of residents in the home.*
- *Ongoing commitment to the young children and not short term with an end date.*
- *Cost of living conditions to access to education, food, ability to pay bills, basic adulting courses and financial knowledge.*
- *That the children are the recipients of the food, clothes and resources directly and not being supplied the funding for them but used only by the carers as this can perpetuate a negative stereotype for the children in care.*

*How do we check standards are working and effective?*

- *Having a safe way to escalate issues outside the department that actually get responded to and children are listened to.*
- *Empowering young people to know what they can do and that they can change the system for the better. Giving them choices and knowledge and support to speak up.*
- *Directly going to the parent, carer, child and doing safety checks regularly, paper trail and stats.*
- *A questionnaire for children in care (CIC), developed and edited and signed off by young people.*

#### ITEM 5: Reintegration Exercise

<sup>s 47F</sup> opened the session after the break with a reintegration exercise. <sup>s 47F</sup> also advised members <sup>s 47F</sup> was available after the session to chat and provide an optional debrief to support the transition out of the meeting and into daily life.

#### ITEM 6: Refresh of the National Out-Of-Home Care Standards Purple box

*Do you know any strong examples of how (lived experience consultancies) have done this well?*

- *Do not just tick a box, have an outcomes/goal oriented project.*
- *Being careful of which organisation you do it through to get the best engagement. Don't be tokenistic. Someone who is specific in the knowledge and thriving in the space, doing it well.*
- *Home Stretch in WA do it very well – so find trusted people who do it well and are passionate and dedicated to the space.*

*When we work with young people, how do you think participants, who aren't employed as a lived experience consultant should be remunerated for their time? (E.g. Cash incentives, gift cards etc.).*

- *Cash incentives and/or gift cards are helpful, but in combination with that actually making the young person feel like they were useful!*
- *Subsidies for health care, dentist, psychologist, hairdresser, or massage etc. negotiated with the young person's particular needs.*
- *Equal pay for equal work on par with other adults.*

*If we are unable to have a lived experience consultant undertake all of this work, are there other ways or people you think young people would feel comfortable speaking with consultants about the NOOHCS?*

- *Anonymous surveys and other anonymous formats are great! If you can guarantee a discreet, accessible and anonymous format, it'll be taken up so quickly!*

- Letters or emails sent to one point on a particular subject matter asking for young peoples lived experiences with conditions around the participation. People can decide if they want to be anonymous or would like further contact. Incentives to engage would be helpful and direction to the young person as to how to share their thoughts.
- Have a group of people with lived experience be in charge of different sections - including consulting with other young people. Find a small group that can be deeply involved in each section. Supporting young people to grow into the role would also be helpful.

#### ITEM 7: Other Matters/Close Meeting

s 22 and s 22 thanked the members for their time and their valuable contributions.

Meeting closed 7:20 pm

#### ACTIONS ITEM

Action	Responsible Party	Due Date
Support members as required to troubleshoot any issues related to GovTeams including sharing tutorial on how to use the platform.	Office for Youth	Ongoing
Fortnightly updates to members	DSS	Ongoing
s 47E(d)	DSS	s 47E(d)
Share grant opportunity guidelines for Early Intervention for Adolescent Boys.	DSS	Once publicly available
Provide YAG members with more information on the Workforce Action, and if consider if there is an opportunity for YAG input.	DSS	Once available

#### ATTENDEES

Role / Organisation	Name
Youth Advisory Group Members	s 47F s 47F
Office for Youth	s 22
Department of Social Services	s 22
Online Support	s 47F
Visual scribe	s 47F





Australian Government



# MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS

SAFE AND SUPPORTED YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP  
16, MAY 2024, 5:00PM – 7:00PM AEST

## Attendees and Apologies

Role	Attendees		Apologies
Youth Advisory Group Members	s 47F		s 47F
Department of Social Services	s 22		
Family and Children's Activity Program	s 22		
Office for Youth	s 22		
s 47F Psychology	s 47F		
Visual Scribe	s 47F		

## Meeting Minutes

### 1. Acknowledgement of Country | Department of Social Services (DSS)

- Meeting opened at 5:00pm with an Acknowledgement of Country.

### 2. Welcome and Introduction | Department of Social Services (DSS)

- s 22 (DSS) outlined the meeting agenda and previously agreed guidelines about how to use the chat function during the meeting.
- An icebreaker activity was conducted which involved sharing songs and artists members were embarrassed to admit they liked. Some examples are:

s 47F

### 3. Agenda Item 3 – FaC Activity | Family and Children’s Activity Program (FaC)

#### Introduction and Background Information

- s 22 from the Family Policy Branch presented on the FaC program funded by the Department of Social Services. This program aims to:
  - Improve the well-being of children, young people, and families.
  - Support families.
  - Enhance family and community functioning.
  - Increase participation of vulnerable people in community life.
- Some of the primary and universal supports funded under this program include:
  - Early intervention mental health supports
  - Resilience building programs,
  - Parenting programs,
  - Peer Support Groups,
  - Playgroups/Toy Libraries,
  - Information, advice and referrals.
- The programs can be provided for children aged 0-18, but many programs focus on the needs of children 0-5 or 5-12.
- The programs are also designed to be early intervention and prevention work rather than supporting families in crisis. Providers may refer clients to more specialised services for more intensive supports.
- s 22 and her team are currently reviewing the FaC Activity Programs. One thing they are exploring is accessibility and inclusivity of the programs and service providers in supporting families and young people. This review is being conducted by talking to service providers, talking to clients and other parents and carers, literature reviews and analysing administrative data.

- So far, they have identified service usage is associated with improvements in child development, family functioning and mental health. Data also shows that access by some diverse backgrounds is unknown and CALD communities are underrepresented.
- The review will continue to gather information and evidence from various sources, including current service providers, clients, and the public.
- DSS will publish a public discussion paper later this year, which will outline the findings and questions from the review, for feedback from stakeholders and interested parties.
- The discussion paper will be an opportunity for young people to share their perspectives and experiences on the FaC programs and how they can be improved.

### Activity and Discussion

*What do these services need to do to be accessible to children and young people?*

- The group discussed the accessibility and inclusivity of services for children and young people, with a focus on early intervention programs such as playgroups, parenting courses, and school readiness programs.
  - E.g. - **s 47F**
- Members shared their experiences and perspectives on the challenges and barriers to accessing services, including location, transportation, age cut-offs, community attitudes and experiences of discrimination.
  - E.g. **s 47F**
- The group discussed the importance of services adapting to changing societal views and the need for more outreach and support for young people to attend services.
- The group discussed lack of flexibility in services.
  - E.g. - youth shelters accepting Young People with age range of 12-25yrs only. A Young Person was turned away because **s 47F** was one month from turning 12.
- The importance of accessibility and inclusiveness in services that support families and young people. Members highlighted the need for physical accessibility, appropriate language, and cultural sensitivity.
- Accessibility issues faced by young people in regional areas, highlighting the lack of reliable transportation to access services, the distance of services from their location and regulations around safety and car transportation being an issue.
- Members highlighted the negative consequences of disengagement and the lack of follow-ups in youth programs.
- Members discussed the need for increased outreach opportunities within different programs to ensure that young people are getting the right service they

need. A member shared their experience of working in a program that did outreach and transport children, but there wasn't enough of that.

- E.g. **s 47F**

. They successfully ran an outreach and transport service. It did work but was not funded. This reduces the capacity of Young People to access interventions such as Mental Health services. Locality and travel should not be a barrier to accessing services.

- It was noted that some governmental policy and procedures can cause 'red tape' issues for providers that affect young people's ability to access services.

*How do you know that your service is accessible and inclusive for young people? How do you demonstrate what? How do you deliver your service in a way that is that?*

- A member discussed their experiences from working in the disability sector and how they deliver services. They talked about the importance of exposing young people to public spaces and providing them with leadership opportunities to develop independence, as well as ways to allow young people to regulate and address their emotions in safe spaces.
- The members discussed the importance of addressing the stigma of Mental Health in Children and Young people when they are seeking help from services. It is normal for Young People to talk about Mental Health now and they should not be made to feel ashamed by a service provider, and some staff members may still see this as a taboo subject. This could be achieved with Peer Support programs, and utilising youth-led programs to promote destigmatisation. They also talked about the need to have more young people involved in management structures and programs that support young people.
- Members discussed how to support young people and people with lived experience in the workforce. They emphasised the importance of meaningful careers and avoiding typical entry-level jobs. They also discussed the negative impact of school culture on children and families.

*Have you seen organisations adapt their way of engaging with particular cohorts of diversity?*

- A member raised the concept of reintroduction of third spaces into the community to develop engagement. After COVID, public spaces are less utilised and an important way of engaging with individuals is building connections / community. Bringing back face to face engagement provides inclusive ways of working.
- Members highlighted that within Department of Education the safeguarding of young people with rules and regulations is becoming stronger. Young People and policies and procedures are getting stronger. However, schools/government are still afraid to take risks and Young People are slipping through the cracks. If we don't take risks, nothing will change.



- Members discussed length of programs. Often, they are only 12 months and then Young People are cut off, often when still at high risk.

*Are there specific accessibility or inclusion considerations that this service (mental health) needs to be thinking about?*

- Members discussed early intervention supports for people experiencing mental health, ill health or wanting to maintain well-being.
- The issue of mental health being dismissed was highlighted, especially for women, and the difficulty in accessing support services due to long waitlists and financial constraints.
- Members highlighted the importance of considering diverse backgrounds and experiences when providing mental health services.
- Services are not available or accessible outside of typical work and school hours, which can make them hard to get to.
- Members expressed there is a need to promote destigmatisation of seeking support for mental health challenges. Suggestions included peer support programs, and programs that involve younger people with lived experience for support.

#### 4. Break

#### 5. Agenda Item 5 – Actions from March Meeting | DSS

- s 22 discussed the updated work plan for the group based on their discussions. The change made was around adding more content around building skills and supporting the group to grow and expand and feel more confident and capable as effective advocates.
- s 22 discussed the intent to provide more personalised letters of introduction to state and territory representatives. She plans to touch base with the group after their consultation on the family law council to get clear on what they want out of the introductions.
- s 22 emphasised that there is a lot of work happening on action items and other work as well. Office for Youth want to utilise GovTeams more and the connection that they have with everyone in the group.
- s 22 and members discussed the advocacy training that the Office for Youth is offering. s 22 encouraged everyone to attend the training as it will be offered again in two parts. She also mentioned that there will be other training opportunities in the future.

s 22 and s 22 discussed the feedback received from the previous year's event and planned to extend their range and target specific organisations. They also discussed the need for more suitable hours for the event. s 22 promised to pass on the feedback to the organising team.

#### 6. Agenda Item 6 – OfY/DSS Government Toolkit | DSS

- s 22 discussed the development of a departmental Toolkit is an opportunity to showcase the work the members are undertaking and how this is communicated within the Department.
- s 22 highlighted how through the toolkit, themes such as transparency and how to work with young people which members they have worked on, alongside templates for internal communication could be gathered to support other areas across the Department to engage well.
- The Group agreed this item would be discussed individually as there was not enough time in the meeting to go through the paper and discussion questions.

## 7. Agenda Item 7 – Other business | DSS and Office for Youth (OfY)

- s 22 discussed a new process for sending out meeting recordings to keep everyone up to date if absent. The recording will be linked to GovTeams and will be active for two weeks. If someone is unable to attend a meeting, they need to let s 22 know, and she will send out the recording. s 22 reminded members of attendance requirements for honorarium payments within their apologies.

## 8. Meeting close

- The meeting closed at 7:00PM AEST time, with an opportunity to chat with s 47F afterwards.

## Action Items – 16 May, 2024

Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Notes
Provide meeting recording and upload on GovTeams - SharePoint	Office for Youth	ASAP	s 22 to upload meeting recording on GovTeams and distribute to members unable to attend meeting
Read discussion paper for more detail on the FaC Activity review	Members	N/A	Members to read the discussion paper to determine how they can provide further feedback
Work Plan and Action Item List	s 22 and s 22 (DSS)	Within 2 weeks	Send the workplan to the OFFI as the goal for the group, alongside examples of Secretary's newsletter and

			communications activities (what/when they occur)
<b>Schedule Individual discussions with members to discuss:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Letters of introduction</li> <li>- Developing a Departmental Practice Toolkit</li> </ul>	DoE / DSS	After 29 May	<p>Members discuss the content and purpose of the introduction.</p> <p>Members provide DSS their views on the discussion paper for item 6.</p>





# MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS

SAFE AND SUPPORTED YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP  
27, JUNE 2024, 5:00PM – 7:00PM AEST

## Attendees and Apologies

Role	Attendees	Apologies
Youth Advisory Group Members	s 47F	s 47F
Department of Social Services	s 22	
Australian Human Rights Commission	s 22	
Office for Youth	s 22	
s 47F Psychology	s 47F	
Visual Scribe	s 47F	

## Meeting Minutes

### 1. Acknowledgement of Country | Department of Social Services (DSS)

- Meeting opened at 5:00pm with Acknowledgement of Country
- s 22 introduced s 22 and s 22, from the Australian Human Rights Commission, and asked Advisory Group members to introduce themselves as well. She introduced s 47F, the visual scribe, s 47F, the psychologist, and s 22, from the Office for Youth.

### 2. Icebreaker | Department of Social Services (DSS)

- s 22 led the group in an icebreaker activity – “Everyone has their favourite childhood tv show, what was your and why?”

- The TV shows evoked some childhood memories for the participants, such as watching with their family members, playing with toys, or relating to the characters.
- The TV shows ranged from cartoons to live-action, from comedy to drama, from sci-fi to fantasy.

Participants provided the following TV shows:

s 47F

### 3. Agenda Item | Supporting Quality Engagement (SQE) activity | AHRC

#### Introduction and Background Information

- s 22 and s 22 from the Childrens' Rights team at the Australian Human Rights Commission presented on the Supporting Quality Engagement (SQE) activity, a three-year project led by the National Children's Commissioner (Anne Hollonds) and her team at the Australian Human Rights Commission.
  - The project aims to promote children and young people's right to have a say in decisions that affect their lives and to recommend ways for the Australian Government to embed their voices in policy development and implementation.
  - The project focuses on different areas of the government's plans each year, and this year it is on Safe and Supported, the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children.
  - As part of this, the team has been asked to consult with children and young people about what identity means to them, what are the things and people that make them who they are, and how they can be supported to build relationships with people with shared lived experiences.
  - The team has developed two group activities and a survey for the consultations, and they are seeking feedback from the Youth Advisory Group on the materials, the language, and the online options.
  - s 22 described the first activity, which is to ask children and young people to write or draw on a blank wall what identity means to them, what makes them feel good, and who are the people that make them who they are.
  - He asks the group for their opinions on the explanation of identity, the questions, and the graffiti wall method.

- After the graffiti wall activity, the team will ask the children and young people to talk about what is on the wall and to explore the importance of relationships and friendships on their identity and well-being.
- s 22 explains that they will show some quotes from the previous year's consultations, where children and young people expressed their desire to connect with others who have similar experiences to them.
- s 22 then described the second activity, which is to ask the children and young people to move to different parts of the room based on their preferences for meeting with others who are like them.
- The group that they are focusing on children aged 8 to 14 years from diverse backgrounds and experiences, and that they value their honest opinions and self-care.

### Discussion

- The members give various suggestions and comments on the graffiti wall activity, such as providing visual aids, stickers with emojis or activities, and examples for the children and young people, using simpler language and avoiding the word identity, addressing the literacy and language barriers, and ensuring the safety and comfort of the participants.
- The members were particularly averse to the use of the word 'identity' when addressing the children ages 8 – 14yrs. The question of a child or young persons identity needs to be broken down. There are many emotional and anxious feelings when young people are consulted and this needs to be considered. Asking an 8-yr old to consider 'identity' is too complex.
- The group discussed other ways to get the younger cohorts to respond to enable the desired outcomes the SQE team require around children and young peoples identity.
- The members liked the idea of showing the quotes from the previous year's consultations, as they think it is engaging and resonates with their own experiences.
- They also raise some issues with the second activity, such as the possibility of feeling left out, singled out, or pressured to choose a certain option.
- They also express some concerns about the potential isolation, confusion, and trauma that the activity might trigger for some children and young people.
- Members suggested using the word 'culture' instead of 'religion' and adding examples to the survey questions to make them more understandable for younger children.
- Additionally, it was suggested adding an element of privacy to the activities and promoting feeling safe about one's culture. The survey could also be adapted for a computer or digital format.
- The members also raised concerns about the potential isolation and singling out of children during the activities and suggested having an element of privacy.
- One member suggested having a follow-up consultation with a therapist or someone qualified to check in on the young people after the consultation.

### s 22 – Survey

- The survey will be, depending on the setting, either online or on paper and is centred around what is important for children and young people to feel good about themselves.
- s 22 asked the group to give their thoughts on the language used in the survey, is it the right sort of wording for the targeted age group?
- The members raised a question around how the survey will be delivered, in a group consultation with support or independently? s 22 confirmed the surveys will be completed during consultations with support.
- A member raised concerns about the complexity of the questions and the need for a trauma-informed approach.
- Members also suggested incorporating visuals to support the examples given in the survey.
- Suggestions were made around rewording some of the questions to make them easier to understand for the younger children and adding prompts to the questions. Some concerns were raised about the complexity of the questions in the survey.
- There was repeated concern throughout the session regarding the need for a trauma-informed approach. The members were seeking constant reassurance of availability of appropriate support when SQE consultations are taking place and also post consultation. Members requested access to the survey post meeting to provide further feedback in writing. They would like to sit and process the survey as a young person having to complete it.

#### 4. Break | Everyone

#### 5. Updates | Department of Social Services (DSS) and Office for Youth

- s 22 provided an update on the Safe and Supported membership and the implications for the group.
- The group members were reminded of the confidentiality and scope of the group after s 47F has left the group and their private chat.
- The group members are asked to share their thoughts on the pros and cons of adding new members.
- s 22 acknowledged the concerns raised by the group members about the impact of adding new members on the group dynamic and the emotional toll it would take on both the existing members and the new members.
- s 22 mentioned that there are risks to both recruiting and not recruiting new members and that the government has commitments and responsibilities to consider. She suggested that the group could come up with options and be involved in the decision-making process.
- s 22 also mentioned that the group's input would be valuable in developing a plan to move forward.

#### Discussion



- The group members shared their concerns about how adding new members would affect the group dynamic, the emotional cost, the time efficiency, and the quality of the work. They also questioned the rationale and the process of recruiting new members, and whether their voices and contributions are valued.
- The members proposed some possible solutions to the problem of having a lack of diversity of voices and experiences in the group, such as engaging with other young people from different states on a one-on-one basis or using other methods of consultation.
- They also expressed their preference for having a say in the decision-making process and being involved in designing the plans.
- The group asked for more information and communication from DSS about the timeline, the expectations, and the outcomes of the recruitment process.
- They also want to know how their feedback will be taken into account and how they will be supported through the transition.
- They expressed their disappointment and confusion about how the decision was communicated to them.
- DSS will look at alternative methods of engagement to enable wider group discussion so that the group can lead in coming up with options.

#### 6. Opportunity for members to debrief with s 47F

- s 47F provided an optional debrief to support the transition out of the meeting and into daily life.

#### Action Items – 27 June 2024

Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Notes
Provide meeting recording and upload on GovTeams - SharePoint	Office for Youth	ASAP	s 22 to upload meeting recording on GovTeams and distribute to members unable to attend meeting
Summary/Overview of discussion with members	AHRC	Week of 15 July	
Provide survey text questions to members	AHRC	Week of 15 July	
New Membership Business case to DSS Executive for their consideration	DSS	18 July 2024	New Membership Business case to DSS Executive for their consideration

Written feedback on new members	Advisory Group members	4 July 2024	Written feedback on new members
DSS to provide YAG members with 'Challenge Statement' to start discussion on new group members	DSS	ASAP	



# MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS

SAFE AND SUPPORTED YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP  
THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2024, 5:00PM – 7:00PM AEST

## Attendees and Apologies

Roles	Attendees	Apologies
Youth Advisory Group Members	s 47F	s 47F
Department of Social Services	s 22	
Office for Youth	s 22	
Urbis / Cox Innal Ridgeway (CIR)	s 47F	
	s 47F	
s 47F Psychology	s 47F	
Visual Scribe	s 47F	



## Meeting Minutes

### 1. Acknowledgement of Country | Department of Social Services (DSS) |

s 22

- Meeting opened at 5:00pm with Acknowledgement of Country

### 2. Icebreaker | s 47F

- s 47F led the group in an icebreaker activity focusing on box breathing and gentle stretching to help all meeting attendees transition from their various pre-meeting contexts into the meeting space.

### 3. Office for Youth Update | Office for Youth | s 22

- s 22 attended the Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group meeting as a mid-program check-in.
- She highlighted the importance of the Youth Advisory Group program and its role in connecting young people with government policymaking.
- s 22 praised the group's achievements, especially noting the impact of their advice on the National Housing and Homelessness Plan, housing and homelessness policy, the National Early Intervention Trial for Adolescent Boys and other key government initiatives. She emphasised the unique position of the group in influencing government decisions.
- During her update, s 22 revisited the Code of Conduct, reminding members of their obligations, such as preparing for meetings, arriving promptly, contributing respectfully, and recognising diversity.
- s 22 discussed upcoming engagements and the importance of feedback from the group to improve the program. She mentioned the mid-program review and the confidential survey as opportunities for members to provide feedback.
- She briefed the group on new initiatives like the digital youth hub and a toolkit to facilitate youth engagement across government agencies.

#### From DSS

- s 22 highlighted how the group's feedback has changed the way she approaches her work within the government, allowing her to view her work through the lens of the group's experiences and feedback.
- s 22 mentioned specific areas where the group's input has been sought this year, including consultations on the Families and Children Activity and the Supporting Quality Engagement activities. She noted the group's direct impact on these initiatives, highlighting the value of their contributions to broader government work.

#### Member feedback:

- s 47F shared their experiences of discussing the group's activities in job interviews and expressed appreciation for the clarity provided on the group's tangible impacts.
- s 47F appreciated the update on the group's impact, addressing a common concern among members about the visibility of their contributions.  
s 47F comments reflected a broader sentiment within the group regarding the importance of feedback and impact of their efforts.

#### 4. Summary of Feedback | Urbis and CIR | s 47F and s 47F

##### s 47F Discussion:

- s 47F provided an update on the development of two monitoring and evaluation strategies (MES): one overarching strategy for the national framework and a complementary strategy specifically for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people. These strategies aim to evaluate the aims and goals of Safe and Supported over its 10-year timeframe.
- s 47F highlighted how feedback from the Youth Advisory Group has helped shape and influence components of these strategies, emphasising the group's contribution to the development process.
- s 47F stressed the importance of explicitly including both children and young people in the strategies, ensuring their voices are represented. This was a direct result of feedback from the group. The strategies now better represent priority groups, including parents and carers with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ communities, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- s 47F discussed the importance of ensuring that the evaluation domains and key evaluation questions are inclusive and representative of all priority groups. Efforts were made to revise the language used to ensure it is understandable and accessible to all. This was as a result of YAG member feedback earlier this year and has been reiterated by other stakeholders in the development of the MES.

##### s 47F Discussion:

- s 47F focused on the aims and goals of the Safe and Supported MES, emphasising the inclusion of young people and the importance of collaboration.
- The aims have been revised to explicitly include young people and emphasize the need for collaboration across sectors and organizations. This revision was influenced by feedback emphasising the importance of young people's voices and the need for accountability and responsibility in government and organisational actions.
- The concept of self-determination, crucial for First Nations communities, has been highlighted to stress autonomy, confidence, choice, and responsibility.
- The First Nations MES document has been closely aligned with the national MES to ensure both documents work together seamlessly. This alignment addresses the unique needs and challenges faced by First Nations communities.
- s 47F emphasised the need for the evaluation methodologies to directly engage children and young people. This was a response to YAG member feedback highlighting the lack of explicit statements in the documents about involving young people in the evaluation process.

##### Discussion

- s 47F asked for clarification on whether both monitoring and evaluation strategies explicitly include children and young people in their evaluations. s 47F confirmed that both documents set an expectation for the evaluation methodologies to actively engage children and young people, ensuring their

voices are represented in the design and implementation of actions and activities.

- **s 47F** and **s 47F** emphasised the importance of active participation by children and young people in the evaluation process. This was highlighted as a key expectation for both primary and secondary data collection methods, aiming to elevate the voices of children and young people throughout the evaluation process.
- The discussions also touched on the implementation approach and evaluation domains, stressing the need for evaluations to be inclusive, accessible, and representative of all priority groups. This includes ensuring that evaluation questions are phrased in plain English and that the methodologies include direct engagement with children and young people.
- **s 47F** asked how likely this will be actioned, in the context of upcoming elections and potential changes to governments.
- **s 22** discussed the continuity and alignment of the Safe and Supported initiative across different governments and the involvement of state and territory governments. He highlighted that the national framework and action plans have been agreed by and continued across different government administrations, emphasising the importance of the initiative for both major parties. **s 22** also mentioned the unique partnership between states, territories, the Commonwealth, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group, aiming to achieve shared objectives for child protection. This partnership is considered significant as it represents a collective effort to address child protection issues comprehensively.
- **s 47F** provided further insights into the monitoring and evaluation strategies (MES) for the Safe and Supported initiative. They highlighted the feedback received from various stakeholders, including the National Children's Commissioner, Anne Hollands, and state commissioners, emphasizing the importance of including children and young people in the evaluation process. This adjustment aims to ensure that the evaluations are inclusive and representative of all priority groups, aligning with the broader objectives of the Safe and Supported initiative to enhance the safety and well-being of Australia's children and young people.
- **s 22** wrapped-up the discussions by focusing on the significant contributions of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) to the monitoring and evaluation strategies (MES) for the Safe and Supported initiative. She highlighted the importance of the feedback received from the YAG and its impact on shaping the MES documents. **s 22** also mentioned the development of a feedback loop document that outlines how the YAG's feedback has been incorporated into the MES, which will be shared with the YAG members following the meeting. This document aims to provide tangible evidence of the YAG's contributions and their impact on the initiative.

## 5. Scheduled break | Everyone



## 6. Departmental Toolkit | Department of Social Services

- After the break, s 22 initiated a discussion about developing a toolkit for DSS. This toolkit is intended to support the OfY toolkit and to complement their work. s 22 emphasised that the DSS toolkit is a means to document lessons learned from working with young people, aiming to provide a foundation for others within DSS to build upon in similar engagements. The DSS toolkit, is intended to be a comprehensive guide that includes corporate policies of DSS while also reflecting the contributions and insights learned from the work of the Safe and Supported Youth Advisory Group.
- s 22 outlined the paper provide a possible structure of the toolkit, noting it is draft and open for discussion and highlighted the importance of including the YAG's perspectives to ensure the toolkit is reflective of their experiences and views. The draft was developed with the aim of identifying sections of the toolkit where YAG members could see themselves contributing, emphasising the principle of "nothing about us without us".
- s 22 focused on the development of a toolkit for DSS, aimed at documenting lessons learned from working with young people. She emphasised that the document is a draft and open for discussion, highlighting the importance of including the Youth Advisory Group's (YAG) perspectives to ensure the toolkit reflects their experiences and views. s 22 reflected on the draft toolkit's structure, which is divided into three parts: considerations before, during, and after an engagement, and then topic headings of important considerations throughout the process.
- She also mentioned the possibility of including various models of engagement, the importance of meaningful partnerships, and the inclusion of feedback from previous engagements. s 22 reassured that the YAG's involvement in developing the toolkit would not require extensive work on their part, as DSS staff would be responsible for the documentation.
- Additionally, she highlighted the potential for including case studies of other programs and setting up interviews with department areas to gather feedback on their approaches to engaging with young people.

### Member discussion

- s 47F inquired about including a specific out-of-home care advocacy/lived experience section and asked if the document would be accessible to the public.
- s 47F questioned the inclusion of supports required to be in place, such as a psychologist for debrief and remuneration.
- s 47F suggested including QR codes in the toolkit for easier access to URLs.
- s 22 encouraged YAG members to review the toolkit document and provide feedback, especially on missing topics or suggestions for inclusion. She thanked s 47F for s 47F suggestion and reflected that it could be a great addition. Specific Sections and Suggestions:
- An introduction or letter from the YAG was suggested as a potential start to the toolkit.
- The importance of being trauma-informed was highlighted, with direct feedback from the YAG included in the document.

## 7. Other matters/meeting close | Department of Social services and Office for Youth

- s 22 advised there is a public online consultation on the DSS Engage website for the "foundational supports program." This program aims to design and deliver additional disability supports for individuals not eligible for NDIS supports, focusing on those with

mental health concerns. The consultation is open until November, and **s 22** thought it might interest the YAG members due to its relevance to their experiences and expertise.

## 8. Opportunity to chat with **s 47F** | Youth Advisory Group members

- **s 47F** provided an optional debrief for members, to support the transition out of the meeting and into daily life.

## Action Items – 19 September 2024

Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Notes
Provide meeting recording and upload on GovTeams - SharePoint	Office for Youth	ASAP	<b>s 22</b> to upload meeting recording on GovTeams and distribute to members unable to attend meeting
Toolkit Feedback	YAG members	27 September 2024	Review the departmental toolkit document and provide feedback on missing topics or suggestions for inclusion. Email feedback to <b>s 22</b> .
Toolkit Accessibility	DSS <b>s 22</b> )	21 November 2024	Inquire with executives about the possibility of making parts of the toolkit accessible to the public.
QR Codes Inclusion	DSS ( <b>s 22</b> )	21 November 2024	Investigate the inclusion of QR codes in the toolkit for easier access to URLs.



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# MEETING MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS

SAFE AND SUPPORTED YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP  
21 NOVEMBER 2024, 5:00PM – 7:00PM AEST

## Attendees and Apologies

Attendees		Apologies	
s 22		s 47F	
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## Meeting Minutes

### 1. Acknowledgement of Country | Department of Social Services (DSS)

- Meeting opened at 5:00pm with Acknowledgement of Country

### 2. Icebreaker | Department of Social Services (DSS)

- s 22 led the group in an icebreaker which involved participants sharing who they would like to interview and why?



Participants provided the following responses:

### Icebreaker Activity Responses:

s 47F

### 3. National Model of Care – Review of emergency accommodation and its suitability for children and young people | Nous Group

s 47F from NOUS discussed the National Model of Care project they are working on for the DSS focused on children and young people accessing crisis accommodation. The aim is to understand the current state of services and develop a national model of care to better support these individuals. The project involves engaging with various stakeholders, including children, young people, peak organisations, service providers, and subject matter experts.

They emphasised the importance of considering the specific needs of different age groups, backgrounds, and circumstances, such as those in regional and remote areas, and those presenting alone or with families. Challenges in the current system include the short-term nature of programs and the need for long-term support and stability.

The next steps involve submitting reports to the government and providing a community report to share findings with the broader community. The project, which started in May, will run until January 2026 and aims to improve support for children and young people who are victim survivors of domestic, family, and sexual violence.

NOUS highlighted the importance of considering the specific needs of different age groups, backgrounds, and living situations of children and young people in crisis accommodation. They asked the following questions for feedback from members, emphasising the importance of their perspectives and experiences in shaping the project.

- What do you think is important for us to consider about the specific needs of children and young people who have experienced domestic and family violence and are potentially looking to access crisis accommodation?

- How do you think we should define the age range for young people in this project? Should it go up to 24 or 25?
- What are the things that need to be improved in the current system to better support children and young people in crisis accommodation?
- What kind of skills or people are best to support the needs of children and young people specifically?
- What are the key requirements that every young person really needs to be able to have safety and stability?
- Is there anything we've not asked you that you think is important for us to know for our work?
- What makes you feel safe accessing services like crisis accommodation? What might the features be? What might you see or hear?
- What are the things that make a difference in how staff interact with you?
- What services might be available within crisis accommodation to support children and young people's goals and needs?

#### **Member feedback:**

- **Age Range for Services:** s 47F suggested that the age range for youth services should not extend to 25, as individuals over 18 are often seen as adults in government services. s 47F recommended focusing on younger age groups to avoid gaps in service provision. s 47F shared an example from s 47F, highlighting issues with service coordination. s 47F described a situation where a young child needed help, but different services (s 47F) were uncoordinated and unhelpful, emphasising the need for better communication between services.
- **Support for Children in Toxic Relationships:** s 47F raised a concern about children in toxic family relationships who cannot seek help independently. The discussion underscored the need for improved communication and coordination between different services to better support children and young people in crisis situations.
- **Training for First Responders:** s 47F emphasised the need for police and first responders to be trained in recognising and handling domestic violence situations, as many currently lack this training.
- **Positive Support and Language:** s 47F highlighted the importance of positive support and language when interacting with children and young people, especially in mental health situations. s 47F shared a personal anecdote about s 47F stressing the need for supportive and trusting communication. The discussion reiterated the need for better coordination between different services to ensure that children and young people receive the appropriate support without being bounced between agencies.
- **Believing Young People:** s 47F pointed out the importance of believing young people when they share their experiences and not making assumptions about their mental state or intentions.
- **Trauma-Informed Approach:** s 47F and the members discussed the necessity of a trauma-informed approach in all interactions with children and young people who have experienced domestic and family violence.
- **Availability and Reliability of Services:** s 47F emphasised the need for crisis accommodation services to be reliable and available 24/7. s 47F shared that in s 47F

**s 47F** some services are only open for limited hours, which is insufficient for young people in crisis.

- **Encouragement and Support:** **s 47F** stressed the importance of encouraging young people to seek support and ensuring they know it's okay to ask for help. **s 47F** shared an example of police using negative language, which can deter young people from seeking assistance.
- **Accommodation for Pets:** **s 47F** mentioned that many crisis accommodation services do not accept pets, which can be a significant barrier for people who find comfort and therapy in their animals. **s 47F** highlighted the need for accommodation to be more flexible in this regard.
- **Social Media:** The group discussed the importance of using social media campaigns and school social workers to raise awareness about available crisis accommodation services and how to access them. Government denying young people access to social media could hinder knowledge of services available.

**Support for Families:** Both **s 47F** and **s 47F** highlighted the need for crisis accommodation services to support entire families, not just individuals, to prevent the separation of children from their parents. Many DV shelters will not take young children which forces mothers sleep in their cars or seek shelter elsewhere to prevent Child Protection involvement.

- Families need to stay together if accessing crisis accommodation. The system does not allow for this. It is the responsibility of the Minister to further consider options for children and young people, so families can be together in crisis.
- **Funding:** **s 47F** emphasised the need for increased funding to ensure that improvements can be made in crisis accommodation services. Without adequate funding, necessary changes cannot be implemented.
- **Staffing and Training:** **s 47F** highlighted the importance of funding for staffing to ensure that services have enough staff to function properly. **s 47F** who couldn't access accommodation until 2:00 AM due to understaffing. **s 47F** also mentioned the need for better training for staff to effectively support young people.
- **Availability of Services:** Both **s 47F** and **s 47F** discussed the need for services to be available at all times, not just during limited hours, to ensure that young people in crisis can access help whenever they need it.
- **s 47F** contributed to the discussion by emphasising the importance of realistic goals and noting that many homeless shelters are closed during the day, which can create instability for young people without family or close friends. **s 47F** suggested the need for programs that provide stability and continuous support.
- **Accessibility Issues:** **s 47F** raised concerns about the difficulty young people face when trying to access Centrelink services. **s 47F** mentioned that the process is often complicated and challenging for teenagers, suggesting that making Centrelink easier to access would be beneficial.

**s 47F** also emphasised the importance of acknowledging the feelings of young people seeking help. **s 47F** noted that many young people might feel like a burden and be hesitant to seek assistance, so it is crucial to let them know that it's okay to ask for help.

- **Program Duration and Stability:** **s 47F** emphasised that many programs for young people, including those in homeless shelters, are often short-term and lack follow-up support. **s 47F** pointed out that this can lead to instability and a cycle of repeated need for assistance.



- **Daytime Programs:** s 47F noted that many homeless shelters are closed during the day, which can leave young people without a place to go or support during those hours. s 47F suggested the need for programs that provide continuous support throughout the day.
- **Social Groups and Aftercare:** s 47F proposed the idea of social groups within shelters and aftercare programs to provide ongoing support and check-ins, helping young people maintain stability and avoid falling through the cracks.
- **Lack of Long-Term Support:** s 47F reiterated that many programs only provide short-term assistance and do not offer long-term support, leading to a cycle of repeated need for help. s 47F stressed the importance of designing programs that consider the long-term needs of young people.
- **Awareness of Services:** s 47F pointed out that many young people are not aware of the available support services, which hinders their ability to access help. s 47F suggested that better communication and awareness campaigns are needed to inform young people about the services they can access.
- **Short-Term Programs:** s 47F highlighted the issue of short-term programs and the lack of long-term support for young people in crisis accommodation. s 47F emphasised the need for stability and continuous support, noting that many programs only last for a short period and do not provide follow-up care.
- **Personal Experience:** s 47F
- **Program Design:** s 47F pointed out that many programs are temporary and do not address the long-term needs of young people. s 47F suggested that programs should be re-evaluated and designed from a young person's perspective to ensure they provide the necessary support for stability and practical life skills.
- **Continuous Support:** s 47F stressed the importance of continuous support and follow-up care, suggesting that programs should include regular check-ins and long-term support to prevent young people from falling through the cracks.
- **National Approach and State Differences:** s 47F emphasised the importance of recognising the differences between states and territories in Australia. s 47F noted that a national approach might not be effective everywhere due to varying local contexts and needs.

#### 4. Break

#### 5. Office for Youth/DSS Update | OFY/DSS

- s 22 provided an update on the in-person meeting which is tentatively scheduled for the week of 3 February 2025. The agenda includes a day with DSS, a youth forum

focusing on regional, rural, and remote topics, and a formal dinner to celebrate completing members and welcome new ones.

- **s 22** update included several key points: The DSS update includes several key points: draft letters to ministers and commissioners have been provided for member review, with feedback requested to finalise and send them out. Feedback on the departmental toolkit is still being incorporated, aiming to reflect the group's experiences over the past two years. Additionally, regarding the Family and Children's Activity, a discussion paper on strengthening parenting programs has been released, and the team is seeking views on this, with a potential group session to discuss further in the week of December 9th.

#### 6. Opportunity to chat with **s 47F**

- **s 47F** provided an optional debrief for members, to support the transition out of the meeting and into daily life.

### Action Items – 21 November 2024

Action Item	Owner	Due Date	Notes
Provide meeting recording and upload on GovTEAMS - SharePoint	Office for Youth	ASAP	<b>s 22</b> to upload meeting recording on GovTEAMS and distribute to members unable to attend meeting
Office for Youth to send out the slides and expanded questions from the meeting to all participants.	DSS	ASAP	
Family and Children's Activity Consultation:  Office for Youth to send the feedback loop and link to the consultation paper.	DSS	22 November 2024	
Members to review the FaC discussion paper and decide if they want to have a group discussion in the week commencing 9 December 2024.	Members	27 November 2024	

Members to review the draught letters for ministers and commissioners and provide feedback.	Members	29 November 2024	
Members to provide feedback on the departmental toolkit	Members	ASAP	